



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental
Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114-2119

Deval L. Patrick
GOVERNOR

Timothy P. Murray
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian A. Bowles
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: May 18, 2007

Contact: Lisa Capone
(617) 626-1119

State Officials Urge Bay Staters to Observe Boat Safety Rules
May 19-25 is Massachusetts Safe Boating Week

BOSTON – With Memorial Day and the start of the summer recreation season fast approaching, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles and the Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) kicked off Safe Boating Week by urging Massachusetts residents to wear life jackets and observe other boating laws and guidelines.

“While it is a great form of recreation, boating can be risky if precautionary measures are not taken to protect oneself, family and friends...We encourage all boaters to ‘Boat Smart from the Start,’” states a proclamation signed by Gov. Deval Patrick to declare May 19-25 Safe Boating Week in Massachusetts.

In addition to wearing life jackets, officials urged boaters to take a safety course, stay sober while boating, and make sure their boats are reliable and in good repair.

“As an avid boater myself, I know people are eager to get onto the Commonwealth’s waterways at this time of year. By taking a few important precautions, boaters can have fun but also stay safe,” Secretary Bowles said.

According to MEP Director James Hanlon, there were nine fatalities from boating accidents in Massachusetts last year. Eight were drownings and none of the victims wore a life jacket. Nationally, hundreds of people drown in boating-related accidents each year, and eight out of every ten victims were not wearing life jackets. In Massachusetts, the past decade has seen 95 boating fatalities. Hanlon said this is a one-third reduction from the previous ten-year period – an improvement attributed to expansion of boater education and marine enforcement, and safer boats and related equipment.

-more

“Wearing a life jacket is the most important factor between life and death in many boating accidents,” said Hanlon.

Massachusetts law requires children under age 12 and all jet-ski riders and water-skiers to wear approved life jackets when boats are under way. The Commonwealth’s boating laws also prohibit anyone under age 12 from operating a motorboat unless accompanied and directly supervised by a competent person 18 years of age or older. Youths aged 12 through 15 must complete an approved basic boating course before operating a motorboat without adult supervision. Operating any vessel under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited.

The Environmental Police encourage boaters of all ages to take a safe boating course. For a schedule of state-run boating courses, as well as links to state- and nationally-approved course providers and other safe boating organizations, visit www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dle/dlecours.htm.

###